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It covers (1) U.S. Federal government documents, especially those from executive branch departments and those from the Congressional branch - - Committees, the U.S. General Accounting Office, and the Congressional Budget Office; (2) policy briefs from major private think tanks, especially those in Washington; and (3) major reports from national professional associations. A few new high quality, high relevance think tank-sponsored books are also listed.

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Reports

Item#1

Burma in the US-China Great Game - Part I. YaleGlobal. David I. Steinberg. December 5, 2011.

The ice-breaking visit of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Naypyidaw ended 50 years of US-Burma estrangement. The Obama administration has signaled desire for U.S. engagement with the pariah regime since 2009, and since March, Burma's Thein Sein has strived to widen the military regime's legitimacy both at home and abroad. The brief analyzes the history, the domestic momentum and big power ramifications of the reforms. Burma's fiercely nationalistic armed forces, known as the Tatmadaw, have been in charge since the nation gained independence from Britain in 1948. The Tatmadaw seems intent on attempting to improve its image, writes the author. The long-term outlook may be uncertain, but after 50 long years, the relationship has been abruptly and amazingly transformed. [Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/burma-us-china-great-game-part-i> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#2

Burma in the US-China Great Game - Part II. YaleGlobal. Aung Zaw. December 7, 2011.

China publicly shrugged at the Obama administration's initiative to engage with Burma, widely seen as part of the U.S. plan to reinforce its position in Asia. The brief analyzes the global ramifications of Burma's willingness to diversify its relations beyond China. The West had imposed sanctions after Burma's violent suppression of the democratic movement and setting aside 1990 election results. China stepped in with aid, providing Burma with diplomatic cover for human rights violations. Burma, encouraged by the U.S. to move toward democratic reform, has become a focal point in what could be the Great Game of the 21st century. [Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/burma-us-china-great-game-part-ii> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#3

Can Asia Step Up to 21st Century Leadership? YaleGlobal. Amitav Acharya. December 1, 2011.

Global power is shifting, particularly in economic matters. Asia's emerging powers seek enhanced leadership roles in world affairs, yet those roles may not be warranted until the nations take on more responsibility for regional and global governance and security, argues Acharya. "Asia's role in global governance cannot be delinked from the question: Who leads Asia?" he writes. The lead candidates, China, Japan and India, each come up short, he maintains. Since the Second World War, the three have each made progress in developing economic resources required for such leadership. But each nation lacks regional legitimacy, largely because of rivalries and lingering mistrust. A collective leadership, along the lines of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, would complement Asia's growing economic power. Acharya concludes that greater engagement in regional forums would prepare Asian leaders for taking

the reins of global governance necessary for tackling climate change, pandemics and other global problems. [Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/can-asia-step-21st-century-leadership> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#4

The Changing Organization of U.S. Farming. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Erik J. O'Donoghue et al. December 2, 2011.

Innovations in farm organization, business arrangements, and production practices have allowed farmers to produce more with less. Fewer labor hours and less land are used today than 30 years ago, and practices such as the use of genetically engineered seeds and no-till have dampened increases in machinery, fuel, and pesticide use. Likely aided by the increased use of risk management tools such as contracts and crop insurance, U.S. agricultural productivity has increased by nearly 50 percent since 1982. Future innovations will be necessary to maintain, or boost, current productivity gains in order to meet the growing global demands that will be placed upon U.S. agriculture.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EIB88/EIB88.pdf> [PDF format, 83 pages].

Item#5

Congressional Lawmaking: A Perspective on Secrecy and Transparency. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Walter J. Oleszek. November 30, 2011.

Openness is fundamental to representative government. Yet the congressional process is replete with activities and actions that are private and not observable by the public. How to distinguish reasonable legislative secrecy from impractical transparency is a topic that produces disagreement on Capitol Hill and elsewhere. Why? Because lawmaking is critical to the governance of the nation. Scores of people in the attentive public want to observe and learn about congressional proceedings. Yet secrecy is an ever-present part of much legislative policymaking; however, secrecy and transparency are not "either/or" constructs. They overlap constantly during the various policymaking stages.

<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/secrecy/R42108.pdf> [PDF format, 19 pages].

Item#6

Divided We Stand: Why Inequality Keeps Rising. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. December 5, 2011.

In the three decades prior to the recent economic downturn, wage gaps widened and household income inequality increased in a large majority of OECD countries. This occurred even when countries were going through a period of sustained economic and employment growth. The report analyses the major underlying forces behind these developments. [Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.oecd.org/document/51/0,3746,en_2649_33933_49147827_1_1_1_1,00.html [HTML format with links to multi-language summaries, data, and access to the full-text].

Item#7

Governmental Tracking of Cell Phones and Vehicles: The Confluence of Privacy, Technology, and Law. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Richard M. Thompson. December 1, 2011.

Technology has advanced considerably since the framers established the constitutional parameters for searches and seizures in the Fourth Amendment. What were ink quills and parchment are now cell phones and the Internet. It is undeniable that these advances in technology threaten to diminish privacy. Law enforcement's use of cell phones and GPS devices to track an individual's movements brings into sharp relief the challenge of reconciling technology, privacy, and law. The primary debate surrounding cell phone and GPS tracking is not whether they are permitted by statute but rather what legal standard should apply: probable cause, reasonable suspicion, or something less.

<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/intel/R42109.pdf> [PDF format, 25 pages].

Item#8

Green Building: Federal Initiatives for the Nonfederal Sector Could Benefit from More Interagency Collaboration. U.S. Government Accountability Office. Web posted December 2, 2011.

Economic, environmental, and health concerns have spurred interest in "green building"--construction and maintenance practices designed to make efficient use of resources, reduce environmental problems, and provide long-term financial and health benefits. Federal laws and executive orders direct agencies to meet green building standards in federal buildings and to foster green building in the nonfederal sector; the latter includes private, state, local, and tribal entities and accounts for the majority of the nation's buildings. GAO was asked to (1) identify current initiatives by federal agencies to foster green building in the nonfederal sector and (2) determine what is known about the results of these initiatives.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d1279.pdf> [PDF format, 76 pages].

Item#9

Illegal Immigration: Gaps Between and Within Parties. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. December 6, 2011.

The public continues to support tough measures to crack down on illegal immigration, but also a path to citizenship for those in the country illegally. A plurality of Americans say both measures should be given equal priority. Fewer say the priority should only be better security and stronger enforcement of immigration laws (29%), or only creating a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants in the U.S. (24%). These opinions have not changed substantially over the past year. [Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/12-6-11%20Immigration%20Release.pdf> [PDF format, 8 pages].

Item#10

Implementing Health Care Reform Policies in China: Challenges and Opportunities. Center for Strategic & International Studies. Charles Freeman and Xiaoqing Lu Boynton. December 2, 2011.

China's health system has spanned the antipodes of potential health system models, ranging from a pure government delivery model to one radically driven by profit incentives, and now China is seeking a hybrid to suit its hybrid economy. [Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://csis.org/files/publication/111202_Freeman_ImplementingChinaHealthReform_Web.pdf [PDF format, 50 pages].

Item#11

Nomination Race Hurting GOP, But Not Helping Obama. Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. December 6, 2011.

As the fight for the 2012 Republican presidential nomination unfolds, more Americans say their impression of the GOP field is worsening than improving. Those views, however, have not resulted in a better view of President Barack Obama at this point. By a margin of two-to-one, more say that their impression of the GOP field is getting worse (31%) than getting better (14%). Half (50%) say their impression remains the same as they learn more about the Republican candidates. About one-in-five (19%) say their impression of Obama has improved as they learn more about the Republicans. [Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.people-press.org/2011/12/06/nomination-race-hurting-gop-but-not-helping-obama/?src=prc-headline> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#12

Revitalizing Distressed Older Suburbs. Urban Institute. Kathryn Hexter et al. Web posted December 7, 2011.

While much has been written about the decline of central cities, very little research has examined the problem in their suburbs. The report focuses on the suburbs of older industrial cities and how best to address the challenges they face. Using census data, literature review, and four in-depth case studies, the authors provide a detailed portrait of the underlying forces shaping distressed suburbs. It highlights a range of best practices used in case study cities for fostering growth and reducing poverty. These lessons can be instructive both to local leaders working to turn their cities around and to the federal policy makers supporting them. [Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412461-Revitalizing-Distressed-Suburbs.pdf> [PDF format, 189 pages].

Item#13

The Strategic Logic of the Contemporary Security Dilemma. Max G. Manwaring. December 2011.

The reality and severity of the threats associated with contemporary transnational security problems indicate that the U.S. and its national and international partners need a new paradigm for the conduct of unconventional asymmetric conflict, and an accompanying new paradigm for strategic leader development. The strategic-level basis of these new paradigms is found in the fact that the global community is redefining security in terms of nothing less than a reconceptualization of sovereignty. The security dilemma becomes, "Why, when, and how to intervene to protect people and prevent egregious human suffering?"

<http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1091> [HTML format with links].

Item#14

Twitter and the Campaign. Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism. December 8, 2011.

The political conversation on Twitter is markedly different than that on blogs -- and both are decidedly different than the political narrative presented by the mainstream press, according to a new study by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. The study analyzed more than 20 million tweets, the online conversation and traditional news coverage. The study finds that campaign discourse on Twitter tended to be more opinionated and often more negative about candidates than on blogs and in the news. The Twitter conversation about a candidate was also more likely to change from week to week than on blogs. [Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.journalism.org/sites/journalism.org/files/FINALTWITTERANDCAMPAIN.pdf> [PDF format, 55 pages].

Item#15

The U.S. Federal Budget Infographic. U.S. Congressional Budget Office. December 2011.

The United States is facing significant and fundamental budgetary challenges. The federal government's budget deficit for fiscal year 2011 was \$1.3 trillion; at 8.7% of gross domestic product (GDP), that deficit was the third-largest shortfall in the past 40 years.

<https://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/125xx/doc12577/budgetinfographic.pdf> [PDF format, 1 page].